

F
547
.G8A7

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. F.547

Shelf .G8A7

PRESENTED BY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



Historical Oration,

DELIVERED BY

PERRY A. ARMSTRONG, ESQ.,

(President of the Old Settlers' Association of Grundy County, Ills.,)

all
At Morris, July 4th, 1876.

—o—
Compiled from Various Sources, but Largely from the Records of LAWRENCE W. CLAYPOOL,
Esq., Historian, and LEVI PIERCE, Esq., Secretary of the Society.

—o—
Morris Ill
PRINTED AT THE REFORMER OFFICE.

1876.

7.6
7

F547
G38A7

1-RC-2046

HISTORICAL ORATION

BY

PERRY A. ARMSTRONG,

BEFORE THE OLD SETTLER'S ASSOCIATION OF GRUNDY CO.,

Delivered July 4th, 1876, at Morris, Illinois.

In 1776 there were on this continent 13 dependent Colonies with a population of about 3,000,000 of white people. One hundred years ago to-day these colonies took the initiary steps to sever their dependence upon the Mother Country, Great Britain, and to establish a republican form of government. A declaration of independence was drawn up by a special committee, appointed by the Continental Congress then in session at Philadelphia. That committee was composed of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Roger Sherman and R. R. Livingston—names as familiar as household words to the American people. Jefferson was the leading mind upon that committee, and his hand penned the Declaration which must forever stand as a monument to the power of his intellect, and his facility to communicate his thoughts upon paper—a gift possessed by him above all of his compatriots. As the reading of the Declaration of Independence was concluded that old bell in the steeple of the old State House in Philadelphia tolled out a joyful peal. It is still preserved and to-day “proclaims liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof,” for these words were inscribed upon it one hundred years ago. It still hangs in old Independence Hall, and for the one hundred and first time sends forth its glad peans of liberty, justice and equality before the law. On the 7th of June, 1776, in obedience to a resolution of instruction, adopted in Convention in Virginia (May 15th,) Richard Henry Lee, one of the delegates to the Continental Congress, introduced in that body the following Resolution: “That the United Colonies are and ought to be free and independent States;

that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be dissolved." This resolution was debated from day to day until the 1st of July when it was passed by a bare majority of the Colonies, and under it the Committee was appointed to prepare and report a proper declaration. Under parliamentary law, Mr. Lee should have been Chairman of this Committee; but well-knowing the peculiar fitness of his colleague, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Lee declined a position on the committee that Mr. Jefferson should be substituted in his place.

In that Declaration of Independence, adopted by the representatives of the thirteen Colonies in Congress assembled at Philadelphia, was the doctrine of the perfect equality of all men before the law for the first time in the world's history enunciated. "All men are created equal," was the key-note that rallied around the stars and stripes the brave and the good. Yea, its clarion notes were heard across the Atlantic, and brought to the defence of that Declaration a La Fayette and De Kalb with hosts of others.

Upon that theory is based the whole superstructure of our Democratic form of Government under which from thirteen dependent, oppressed and down-trodden Colonies in 1776, thirty-eight free and sovereign States, with a population of over forty millions of intelligent, patriotic, christian people have sprung up within the cycle of one century—a growth without a parallel in the history of nations. Illinois, now the fourth State in the galaxy of the Union, was then but a howling wilderness, with but few civilized inhabitants. It, with the territory now embraced in many other of the Western States, was then known as the North Western Territory, and that portion embraced within the limits of the State of Illinois, so far as under the control of any civilized nation was in the hands of the Mother Country—Great Britain. In compliance with the joint Resolutions of the Congress of the United States and the President's proclamation requesting this centennial celebration of our natal day to be devoted to local history of the various counties of these United States, we shall endeavor to give at least a portion of the history of Grundy County, and more especially the early part thereof. The State of Illinois derived its name from a now extinct but formerly great nation of Indians, comprising no less than five tribes, known under the term Illini, or Illinois. The Tamarraos, Michigamies, Kaskaskias, Cahokias and Peorias, each of and within themselves was a powerful nation, and when united they were superior in numbers to the Six Nations, known as the Iroquois, with whom they had many bloody battles, and by whom they were finally vanquished, owing to the superior arms or implements of war used by the latter from coming in more frequent contact with the whites, owing to their more eastern locality. The significance of the word Illini, afterwards changed by the French to Illinois, is *real* or *superior* men. The first white men that passed through the territory comprising Grundy County were the Jesuit

Priest, Marquette, and his companion, Louis Joliet. The latter was educated for the Priesthood, but never took the orders, a native of Quebec, Canada. he was a man of great energy and courage. Jaques Marquette was a native of France, and a religious enthusiast of great ability and untiring zeal. These two intrepid explorers, with only five men as assistants and guards, with such provisions and clothing as they could store away in two light canoes, embarked on the 17th day of May, 1673, on their perilous voyage. Coasting along the northern shore of Lake Michigan to Green Bay, thence up Fox River to Lake Winnebago, thence carrying their canoes and baggage to the Wisconsin River, a distance of three miles, and down that stream to the Father of Waters, the mighty Mississippi, and down its swift current to the mouth of the Arkansas, and then returning as far as the mouth of the Illinois they were told by the Indians that the Illinois River was a more direct route to Lake Michigan, hence they ascended the Illinois, passing Starved Rock Sept. 16th, 1673, near which was located the great town of the Illini, called Kaskaskia, which in their language means capital or seat of government. (This city having been annihilated by the Iroquois, in 1680, the capital of the Illini was transferred to what is now Randolph Co., Illinois, under the same name, Kaskaskia, which still retains the name, although the Illini has been extinct over a hundred years.) After landing to view this singular and historic rock and celebrating as best they could their ritualistic Mass, they passed on *via* the Desplaines, and again carrying their canoes across to the Chicago River. On passing the present site of the city of Morris, about the 18th day of Sept., 1673, they found quite an extensive Indian village here. It was the home of the Piankashaws, which a century later had for their chief the celebrated Blackbird.

Again in 1675, Marquette returned down the Desplaines and Illinois Rivers to Kaskaskia, near Starved Rock, and established the Mission of the Immaculate Conception—the first in the Territory. This Mission was, however, destroyed in 1680, by the dread Iroquois, who surprised the Illinois and burned their town. In 1679, the intrepid traveler and explorer, Robert Cavalier, but more generally known as La Salle, the son of a wealthy farmer in France, a Catholic in faith but not a Priest, finely educated and of rare eloquence, ever ready for adventure and always on the look-out for discoveries, accompanied by Joliet as a guide, Henri Fonti, a one-handed Italian of great courage and rare financial talent, Fathers Louis Hennepin, Gabriel Ribourde and Zenohe Membre, Jesuits, and some 28 other Frenchmen, passed down the river with seven boats to Kaskaskia, or the Indian village, near Starved Rock, in La Salle county, where they found, as stated by Hennepin, 461 lodges and from 6,000 to 8,000 inhabitants. That they were cultivating large fields of corn, beans and pumpkins, and that they found Fathers Marquette and Dablon there at that time engaged in trying to christianize these Indians. Poor Marquette had sacrificed his health in his exposures to such an

extent that he was compelled to abandon his Mission in the year 1679, and died ere he reached the French settlements in Canada. La Salle and his band of Frenchmen built a fort near where Peoria now stands and named it Fort Crevecoeur, or Fort of the broken-hearted, in view of the dangers and treacheries he had passed through. In the spring of 1680 Starved Rock was fortified as a fort by Tonti, under the orders of La Salle, and was held by him for 20 years. It was called Fort St. Louis, in honor of Louis XIV., then King of France. Many voyages were made up and down the Illinois River by La Salle and his subalterns from 1680 to 1700. Illinois was a dependency of Canada, and formed a part of Louisiana from 1682 to 1721, when it was divided into seven districts and called New Orleans, Biloxi, Mobile, Alabama, Natchez, Natchitochis and Illinois. From its discovery by La Salle, say in 1679 to 1759, the Territory of Illinois was the capital stock of the most gigantic swindles in land trades and land grants, bank capital, &c., that ever was witnessed upon this Continent. In 1759 the ownership of this Territory was transferred from the French to the English, by the battle upon the bloody Plains of Abraham, where the heroic Wolfe and the gallant Montcalm, the commanders of the opposing armies, were both mortally wounded, and where the brave General Wolfe, when told that the enemy were leaving the field in flight exclaimed, "then I die in peace." From this time up to 1778, the Territory was attached to Virginia and known as the North Western Territory, when it was wrested from the English by that brilliant officer and heroic Virginian, Col. George Rogers Clark, who, under a commission from Governor Patrick Henry, appointing him Lieut. Colonel, authorized him to raise seven companies of fifty men each, officered in the usual manner, and properly armed to attack the British force at Kaskaskia (in Randolph Co., Ill.) He started from the Falls of the Ohio on the 24th of June, 1778, on this hazardous enterprise, with only 153 men, and struck out through the trackless forests without horses, ambulances, wagons or tents, marching on foot with muskets and knapsack,—sleeping upon the bare ground and depending upon wild fruit and such game as they could kill by the wayside, ragged, weary and worn, they reached Kaskaskia July 4th, and by a ruse and bold attack were in full possession of the town and fort, in less than two hours' time, without spilling a drop of blood. He next sent a force under Major Bowman to capture Fort Cahokia, some 50 miles further up the Mississippi River. This expedition moved with such celerity and at the same time secrecy that the inhabitants of Cahokia had no knowledge of the presence of the dreaded "Long Knives," as the Virginians were termed, until a surrender of the fort was demanded. Lake Kaskaskia, Cahokia surrendered without firing a gun. These were the only places of importance in the Territory and the only fortifications, hence Col. Clark established his headquarters at Kaskaskia, and at once commenced forming treaties of peace and amity with the numerous Indian tribes of the Territory, and strengthening the friendship between the Americans and the French settlers. He was a man of the most wonderful executive ability and specially endowed by the Creator with those traits of character

that excited the fears and won the confidence of the untutored Red Men. In their negotiations with the Indians the English had sought to make friends by a profuse expenditure of presents of trinkets and comparatively worthless gew-gaws, suited only to catch the fancy of the squaws and papooses. This course Col. Clark deemed unwise and extremely impolitic. He never made the first advances, and seldom made any presents to them, and when he did it was with such an air of reluctance that enhanced their value in the minds of the recipients. About the first of Sept., 1778, there was a grand council of the various tribes of the Territory assembled at Cahokia, to which Colonel Clark was invited. The Indians being the solicitors, Col. Clark took his seat in the middle of the Council, when one of the Chiefs approached him bearing three belts, one being the emblem of peace, another containing the sacred Pipe of Peace, and the third the fire to light it. Lighting the pipe, he first presented it toward Heaven, then to the earth, and then swinging it around in a circle to invoke the spirits to witness their good intentions, it was then presented to Col. Clark and the other members of the Council. Then another Chief arose and spoke in favor of peace, concluding his harrangue by dashing to the earth the bloody belt and flag given him by the English, and stamping them into the earth as evidence of their rejection. Col. Clark very coldly told the Council that he would consider what had been said to him and give them his reply on the morrow, intimating, however, that their existence as nations depended upon the action of the Council, and that as peace was not concluded they had better not shake hands with the Long Knives, for it would be time to give the hand when the heart could go with it.

On the following day the Council reassembled, when Clark replied :

"Men and warriors ! * * You informed me yesterday that you hoped the Great Spirit had brought us together for good. I have the same hope, and trust each party will strictly adhere to whatever is agreed upon whether it be peace or war. I am a man and warrior, not a counselor. I carry war in my right hand, peace in my left. I am sent by the Great Council of the Long Knives and their friends to take possession of all the towns occupied by the English in this country and to watch the red people, to bloody the paths of those who attempt to stop the course of the rivers and to clear the roads for those who desire to be in peace. I am ordered to call upon the Great Fire for warriors enough to darken the land that the red people may hear no sound but of birds which live on blood. I know there is a mist before your eyes. I will dispel the clouds that you may clearly see the causes of the war between the Long Knives and the English, then you may judge which party is in the right, and if you are warriors, as you profess, prove it by adhering faithfully to the party which you shall believe to be entitled to your friendship." He then explained in detail the causes which led to the revolution and concluded—"The whole land was dark ; the old men held down their heads for shame, because they could not see the sun ;

and thus there was mourning for many years over the land. At last the Great Spirit took pity on us and kindled a Great Council Fire at Philadelphia, planted a post, put a tomahawk by it and went away. The sun immediately broke out, the sky was blue again and the old men held up their heads and assembled at the fire. They took up the hatchet, sharpened it and immediately put it in the hands of our young men, ordering them to strike the enemy as long as they could find one this side of the Great Water. The young men immediately struck the war post and blood was shed. In this way the war began and the enemy were driven from one place to another until they got weak and then hired the red people to fight for them. The Great Spirit got angry at this and caused your old father, the French King, and other great nations to join the Long Knives and fight with them against all their enemies. So the English have become like deer in the woods, and you can see that it was the Great Spirit that troubled your waters, because you have fought for the people with whom he was displeased. * * * * Here is a bloody belt and a peace belt ; take which you please. Behave like men, and do not let your being surrounded by Long Knives cause you to take up one belt with your hands while your hearts take up the other. * * * It is you take the path of peace and are received as brothers by the Long Knives and then listen to bad birds that are flying through the land, you cannot longer be considered men, but creatures with two tongues which ought to be destroyed." To this figurative and eloquent address the great Chief, Blackbird, replied :

" We have listened with great attention to what the Chief of the Long Knives told us, and are thankful that the Great Spirit has opened our ears and hearts to receive the truth. We believe you tell us the truth, for you do not speak like other people, and that our old men are right who have always told us that the English speak with double tongues. We will take the belt of peace and cast down the bloody belt of war. Our warriors shall be called home ; the tomahawk shall be thrown into the river where it can never be found ; and we will carefully smoothe the road for your brothers whenever they wish to come and see you. Our friends shall hear of the good talk you have given us, and we hope you will send chiefs among our countrymen that they may see we are men and adhere to all we have promised at this fire which the Great Spirit has kindled for the good of all who attend." These extracts are sufficient to show the great ability of Col. Clark.

To the eloquence of a Cicero he added the dash of a Caesar and the tact of a Napoleon. He died young or we should have heard more from him.

In Oct., 1778, the Legislature of Virginia erected the conquered Territory,—which is now divided into five sovereign States of the Union with a present population of 9,000,000 people,—into the COUNTRY OF ILLINOIS, with Col. Clark as military commander and Col. John Todd was, on the 12th of December, 1778, appointed by Gov. Patrick Henry, Lieutenant, commander of the County of Illinois. The latter was in command of this county of Illinois up to the time of his death, which occurred at the battle of Blue Licks, in

Kentucky, August 18, 1782. Initiatory steps had been taken by Virginia, Jan'y 2d, 1781, to cede this County of Illinois to the Congress of the United States, but it was not consummated until March 1st, 1784. From this time up to Aug. 26, 1818, when Illinois was admitted into the Union as a State, this "County of Illinois," but better known as the North Western Territory, was under Territorial Governors, Gen. St. Clair being one and Gen. Harrison another of them. From a population of 50,000, in 1818, Illinois has to-day fully 2,600,000.

GRUNDY COUNTY

Is composed of Townships No. 31, 32 and 34, north of the base line and Ranges No. 6, 7 and 8, east of the 3d Principal Meridian, and is therefore 24 miles from north to south lines, and 18 miles from east to west lines. The Desplaines and Kankakee Rivers unite on Sec. 36, T. 34, R. 8, near the east line of the county, and form the Illinois River, passing a little south of a westerly course leaves the county at Sec. 30, T. 33, R. 6, on the west line. The Illinois and Michigan Canal follows very closely the river all the way through the county. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Rail Road enters the county on Sec. 1, T. 34, R. 8, and passess out on the west on Sec. 18, T. 33, R. 6, thus running nearly parallel with the River and Canal. The Chi., Alton & St. Louis Rail Road enters the county from the east on Sec. 24, T. 32, R. 8, running south west through the south east part of the county, passing out through Section 34, T. 31, R. 7, while the Illinois River Rail Road passes from east to west through about the centre of the county. In fossil botany Grundy County stands unrivalled by any locality in the world, and in coal the supply is inexhaustible, though the strata is thin, ranging from 30 to 36 inches, and in its Aux Sable sandstone it has the finest building stone in the world. Originally a part of La Salle County, Grundy was erected under act of the General Assembly of this State, approved Feb. 17, 1841, and was named for Felix Grundy, the great lawyer of Tennessee. Under the act the election of officers for the new county was fixed for May 24th, 1841, at the tavern of Columbus Pinney, but better known as Castle Dangerous, some 3 miles west of Morris. This was the only voting place for the entire county, but was amply sufficient, for there were but 148 votes cast; and they were all out, for seldom has there been a more exciting election, caused chiefly by the fact that Wm. E. Armstrong and Geo. H. Kiersted, both of whom afterwards became county officers and obtained the confidence and respect of the people, had at that time just removed from Ottawa to Grundy and were candidates—one for Sheriff, the other for Recorder. They were both beaten at this election. Mr. Isaac Hoge was elected Sheriff (but failed to qualify, and at a subsequent special election Mr. Armstrong was elected to that office, and was re-elected several times afterwards.) The officers elected at this time were James Nagle, Clerk of the County Commissioner's Court; Henry Cryder, Jacob Claypool and James McKeen County Commis-

sioners ; L. W. Claypool, Recorder of Deeds ; Leander Leclere, Coroner ; Joshua Collins, Probate Justice ; Sidney Duntun, County Treasurer ; and Leander Newport County Surveyor. Of those 148 voters who participated in the organization of this county, 35 years ago, about 30 are still living—Wm. H. Perkins, Samuel S. Rindall, Wm. Walters, John Downey, Samuel Hoge, Wm. Hoge, Isaac Hoge, Lawrence White, William White, Thomas Carroll, Zachariah Walley, James McKeen, James Thompson, James Harvey, Jeremiah Collins, Joshua Collins, Philip Collins, John Loughhead, Orville Cone, John Dewey, Jacob Claypool, Michael H. Cryder and L. W. Claypool are still residents of the county, while Messrs. Theron Collins, Joseph Lewis, Daniel M. Thomas, Elijah Walker, Barton Holderman, Columbus Pinney and Alex. K., better known as "Sucker Owen," are still living or were at last accounts. The residue have passed to the other side of the silent river.

The following are the earliest settlers, and in the order of their settlement as nearly as we can locate them : Wm. Marquis and family, moved with ox-team and schooner-wagon from Madison County, Ohio, overland through the wilderness to S fraction of Section two, Township thirty-three, Range seven, in October, 1828. He built a small cabin of such material as he and family could handle, and into this was placed his household effects. He was the pioneer settler by full three years. His nearest neighbor was James Galloway, near where Marseilles now stands, a distance of nearly 20 miles. It was here that he lost his son, William, 16 years of age, who died of fever in August, 1830. Physicians there were none within a hundred miles. Having no place to keep the corpse in the one small room of his cabin, which served for kitchen, dining-room, bed-room and sitting room, he wrapped the inanimate body up as best he could, placed it on top of his little smoke house to keep it away from the prowling wolves. Unable to bury his son without help, and his wife and daughters being sick, he struck out on foot for his nearest neighbor, Mr. Galloway, 20 miles distant, to obtain his assistance in burying his dead child. Sick at heart, emaciated and weakened by sickness, and worn out by long, solicitous and unceasing watching by the sick bed of his son, this afflicted man took his solitary course through the trackless prairies and pathless woods, on this sad errand. Footsore and weary he reached Mr. Galloway's house at eventide, too much fatigued and overcome by the excessive heat of the day and its labors to think of returning before the next day. Mr. Galloway, like himself, had no horses—they had no grain to feed them or place to keep them—thus these two started on their funeral procession early on the morrow, and reached their destination in the evening, too wearied and worn to attempt the funeral that day. Early on the following day they commenced the preparation for the first funeral of the county. The first and most important question was what would they do for a coffin. There was no lumber within fifty miles. They had no tools save a hand saw, auger, ax and hammer. They started to find something in which to place the body. An Indian canoe was found in the

Mazon, near by. This was confiscated and appropriated. With the old hand-saw the canoe was cut in two and one end was taken for a coffin. With the ax a basswood tree was felled and a portion of the trunk was split into puncheons to make the end piece and coffin lid. The corpse was then placed in this strange coffin. Having no nails, the auger was used in boring a sufficient number of holes to fasten the end piece and lid, and wooden pins were made and driven in. Thus was the first coffin constructed in this county. Having succeeded in getting the corpse in the coffin the next difficulty was in getting it to the grave which they had dug on the highland near where Mr. Samuel Holderman now lives. The old wagon with which he had moved to the State two years previous could not stand the sunshine and the storm to which it had been exposed for want of shelter and had tumbled down. A yoke of oxen were brought into requisition, and with a log chain around one end, they started to "snake" the coffin to its place; but, unfortunately, the oxen had not been worked for some time, and had grown wild and unmanageable; they broke away from their drivers and ran for dear life into that monster slough east of Samuel Holderman's house, and here they persisted in remaining until near sundown before they were coaxed to be driven to the solitary grave. The grave of young Marquis, like that of Moses, "no man knoweth the spot." The Marquis family, having the first funeral, doubtless had the first wedding, that of their eldest daughter, Nancy, to James J. Halsey. Mr. Wm. Hoge's was doubtless the second family here. He settled with his family on Sec. 25, T. 34, R. 6. where he still resides, in the fall of 1831, and James B. Hoge, his son, is believed to be the first white child born in the county. He was born May 6th, 1834. James McKeen, Esq., is probably the third. He settled on the Aux Sable, in 1833, and built the first house in Morris, a log cabin, about where the gas works now stand, in May, 1834, for John P. Chapin. John Beard, Sr., his father-in-law, settled where Shermanville now stands, in 1833. In Nov., of the same year, Mr. Zachariah Walley settled where he still lives. A. K. Owen settled on Sec. 24, Town of Mazon, in May of that year. Col. Sayers built a cabin near where J. H. Pattison's house now stands in same year. It was occupied the next year by W. A. Holloway, who is still living. Mr. John Faylor, the father-in-law of Amos Clover, Esq., built a cabin on Sec. 33, in Town of Mazon, in same year. Wm. H. Perkins built a log cabin at his old homestead, in the Town of Aux Sable, in Sept. of that year, and Nathaniel H. Tabler built his first house near where he still lives, in Oct. of that year. Mr. Salmon Rutherford settled on Sec. 23, 34, 8, in June, 1833, and Henry Cryder, father of M. H. Cryder, Esq., settled on Section eight, Township thirty-four, Range eight, in the same year. In 1834 there were quite a number of families settled here. Geo. W. Armstrong built a cabin on section 6, Town of Vienna, in the early part of March. A Mr. Grove built a cabin about the same time on section 4, same town, now occupied and owned by Jonathan Wilson. Early this spring, James McCarty, an old bachelor, took

possession of a little bottom land, 2 or 3 acres, on section 5, Wauponseh Grove, formerly occupied by the Chief, Wauponseh, as a corn patch. He built him a little camp and raised a crop of corn, &c., with a *hoe*. In the fall he built him a shanty of the corn fodder, in which he wintered. The families of the Collinses, Claypools, Samuel and Isaac Hoge, E. W. Chapin, Jacob Spores, Charley Paver, Dr. L. S. Robbins, Datus Kent, Daniel Bunch and Timothy Horrom were among the settlers of 1834. Edward Hollands started the first blacksmith shop at what is known as Holland's Ford, on the Mazon Creek, in 1835.

MORRIS.

Under the act, creating the county of Grundy, Ward B. Burnett, Relief S. Durweya and Wm. E. Armstrong were appointed, in conjunction with the Canal Commissioners, to locate the county seat. It also required the county seat to be located on Canal land, and directed them to set apart for that purpose any quantity of canal land, not exceeding ten acres, and after doing so to proceed to lay off said land into a town site, embracing lots, streets, alleys and a public square, giving one-half to the State and the other to the County, alternately, and of equal value, the County to pay for its share at the rate of ten dollars per acre, thus making everything subserve to the interest of the Canal, then in course of construction. This County Seat Board was composed of parties, representing, as the sequel proved, conflicting and antagonistic interests. Generals Thornton and Fry and Newton Cloud, composing the Board of Canal Commissioners, were looking with an eye solely to the interest of the canal fund, while Gen. Burnett and Messrs. Durweya and Armstrong were looking to the interests of the people of Grundy County in locating the seat of justice where it would be the most accessible and best location regardless of collateral issues. The competing points were sections 7 and 9, both in T. 33, R. 7. Nine was central from east to west. Seven was two miles west of the geographical center. Both were several miles north of the center from north to south, but by the act the seat of justice must be located on the line of the Canal. The greater portion of section 9 lies south of the Illinois River—indeed but a mere fraction—that part of the city lying south of Washington and West of Division Streets, is all that lies north of the river, while nearly all of section 7 does lie north of the river, hence the Canal Commissioners were in favor of Sec. 7, while the others were for 9, and a dead lock was the result. Thus the matter stood for a year, while Grundy County presented the anomalous condition of being a county without a county seat. In 1842, Hon. Isaac N. Morris, of Quincy, Illinois, was appointed to succeed Gen. Thornton, on the Board of Canal Commissioners, and this joint committee on county seat again met, on the 12th of April, 1842, when Mr. Morris cast his vote for section 9, and in honor of that vote was the county seat named Morris. As we do not find any lots in the name of Mr. Morris, we are lead to the conclusion that no bribery was used in obtaining

his vote. In the meantime a town was being built here where Morris now stands, Mr. Armstrong settled here, and the county's business had to be transacted. The County Commissioner's Court was held on Monday, the 14th day of June, 1841, as the record says, "at the house of Wm. E. Armstrong, in said county," thus, under the provisions of the act forming Grundy County, its organization was perfected and completed. The new town was called Grundy at first. Afterwards an attempt was made to change the name to Xenia, but the Board of County Commissioners could not agree upon the orthography of the word. This was before the county seat was definitely located. The first settler where Morris now stands was John Cryder, who moved into the log cabin built by Mr. McKeen, in 1834. The next was Peter Griggs, who built a cabin near where the aqueduct now is in 1837, and of the inhabitants of 1845 there are left but C. H. Goold, John Antis, John McNellis, James B. Jones, Dominick McGrath, P. A. Armstrong, Thomas Reynolds, M. P. Wilson, Thomas Murnan, John Hart, John Glennen, Jacob Griggs and Thos. E. McGrath, barely a baker's dozen. The Morris Post Office was established in November, 1842, L. W. Claypool, P. M. It was supplied by horseback from Ottawa to Joliet once a week. The gross receipts of the office for first quarter of 1843 were \$12.15. There were two other post offices then in Grundy county—Dresden and Kankakee, now Shermanville—but they have long since been discontinued. George H. Kiersted succeeded Mr. Claypool as Post Master in 1845, and carried the mail around with him in his hat and distributed it to parties he might meet. That was when George was a giant in intellect and physical strength. He was a noble-hearted fellow, and we miss him much to-day. "Peace to his 'mains."

A petition signed by 68 voters, being nearly one-half of the entire voters of the county, was prepared in the fall of 1841, praying the establishment of a post office at the "Town of Grundy, on Sec. 4, T. 33, R. 7," and forwarded to the Postmaster General, but refused because it was not a county seat. So the good people of Grundy were compelled to go either to Dresden, nine miles distant, to get their letters and papers, or go without them. (The postage in those days was 25 cts in hard money on each letter.) Mr. Armstrong being fully satisfied that the county seat would be ultimately located on Section nine, removed his family from Ottawa here, taking possession of the only house—the log cabin built by Mr. McKeen, in 1834, as before stated, and commenced the erection of a hotel upon the spot now occupied by the Hopkins house. This hotel was known as the "Grundy Hotel," and was burnt down in the winter of 1851. In this building was held all the Courts for nearly two years. He also, upon his own responsibility, erected a wooden structure upon the north west corner of the now public square for a Court House, which was used as such until the erection of the present fine Court House in 1856. A town was laid off by John P. Chapin, on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 4, known as Chapin's Addition to Morris, and this locality was looked

upon and considered by the people as the county seat. Mr. Claypool, the Recorder, built a small frame house west of the Court House where Shaw's restaurant now stands, and opened his office of Recorder there—thus the full machinery of a county government was put in operation without a county seat, for by the act creating the county the people had no voice in locating it save through the Commissioners named in the act. The first term of the Circuit Court was held at the log cabin of Mr. Armstrong, in June, 1841, Theophilus W. Smith, Judge of the 7th Judicial Circuit, presiding. There was but one case on the docket and that was dismissed by agreement of parties. There was nothing for the Grand Jury to investigate, not even a jail, and they were discharged at once. The record of this term of Court is written upon a half sheet of letter paper and pasted into a record book subsequently purchased for that purpose. Judge Caton held the next term of the Circuit Court, and Richard M. Young succeeded Caton. Judge David Davis held one term of this Court. Up to 1846 there was no jail of any kind in the county. In Dec., 1845, Jacob Claypool and Geo. H. Kiersted were appointed a committee to prepare plans and specifications and to let the contract for a jail, to be located near the south east corner of the public square. They performed that labor in rather a new style of architecture. The plan adopted was to sink a hole in the ground 14x14 and 12 feet deep, with a cabin on top, making the floor, sides and top of heavy hewed timber, cutting out a space in the centre for a trap door to drop the prisoners through. This trap door was made of bars of iron running across each other at right angles, lattice work, to let a little daylight through, and was fastened on top by hasp and staple with a heavy padlock. The contract for this underground jail was awarded to Dominick McGrath, for \$202.60, he being the lowest responsible bidder; but when the Commissioner's Court came to settle with him, while the work was satisfactorily done on his part, yet these Solons then composing the Board of County Commissioners thought "Old Dom" was getting rich too fast, and refused to pay him unless he would throw off \$40 from the contract price. This he finally assented to, and received his county order, then worth about 75c on the dollar, for \$162.50, and this was the price of jails in 1845-6. So inhuman did this jail appear to Old Bill Armstrong, known as "the Emperor of the Grundies," who was Sheriff of the county from the fall of 1841 to 1848, that he seldom put a prisoner in it. Even Captain Cottrell, who took a change of venue all the way from McHenry county, and was proven guilty of stealing nearly everything from a wheelbarrow to a threshing machine, was saved from this terrible hole in the ground, and in time so gained the confidence of the Emperor that he was placed in charge of the ferry, which was established near where the bridge now stands, and while there he made friends enough to insure his acquittal on the trial; not because he had not been proven guilty of the charges in the indictment, but because they thought he had reformed and repented. Poor Cottrell, his acquittal was really an injury to him, as he next attempted to steal a steamboat, at Louisville, Ky.,

and was sent to penitentiary for 14 years. At the December Term, 1849, of the County Court, who under the Statute of 1845 succeeded the County Commissioner's Court, Geo. H. Kiersted, Philip Collins and Robert Gibson were appointed Commissioners to lay off the County into Towns under Township Organization. They divided the county into thirteen towns and submitted their report March 2d, 1850. The names of two of these towns were changed from the report. What is now Aerienna was "Fair View," and Goodfarm was "Dover," in their report. The town of Felix was organized in 1860, and named Felix for Felix Grundy—thus, although there are but 12 Congressional Townships, there are 14 Towns in the County, viz.: Aerienna, Aux Sable, Braceville, Felix, Greenfield, Goodfarm, Highland, Mazon, Morris, Nettle Creek, Norman, Saratoga, Vienna and Wauponseh. The names of these various towns were suggested by the inhabitants. Saratoga, for instance, was named by Mr. C. G. Conklin, for Saratoga, New York. Wauponseh was named like Wauponseh Street, in Morris, for that old heathen and black-hearted murderer, Wauponseh, the Pottawatomie Chief, who formerly lived at what is also called Wauponseh Grove. The last act of this old fiend before he moved west of the Mississippi, in 1837, was the cold-blooded murder of captive squaw, the unfortunate Osage, to whom had been assigned the drudgery of taking care of his copper-colored papooses. With the instinct of nature this poor squaw attempted to gain her freedom by flight from her hateful bondage. She was pursued and brought back and beaten nearly to death with clubs in the hands of Wauponseh's squaws, then bleeding and suffering the most agonizing pains, she was laid upon her back upon the newly plowed land of Mr. McKeen, near the Kankakee River, where she was surrounded by the squaws of Wauponseh, crouching down in a circle around their half-murdered victim, with the scorching rays of an August sun pouring down on her bruised and bleeding face, this old fiend standing near her head delivered to her some kind of a jargon lecture and then caused her sister captive—an Osage squaw—to brain her with a tomahawk, thus inflicting not only the death penalty, but the most degrading one known to the Indian,—that of being killed by a squaw.

Up to the time the deed was done not an Indian save Wauponseh was in sight, but then they seemed to rise, like the soldiers of Roderic Dhu, from every copse and fern and came swooping around like a flock of buzzards to a carrion. The body was carried to the edge of the Kankakee River and covered with sand and left to the mercy of the wolves, while Wauponseh and his band started on their trip west of the Mississippi River never to return. Mr. McKeen, who witnessed the transaction with horror, waited until the murderers were out of sight, when he dug a grave and deposited the body of this unfortunate captive therein and gave her a decent burial. The name of Wauponseh should stand with that of the Modoc, Capt. Jack, and only used in execration and scorn. He was a giant in size—a Devil by nature. His name has been confounded with that of Waubensee

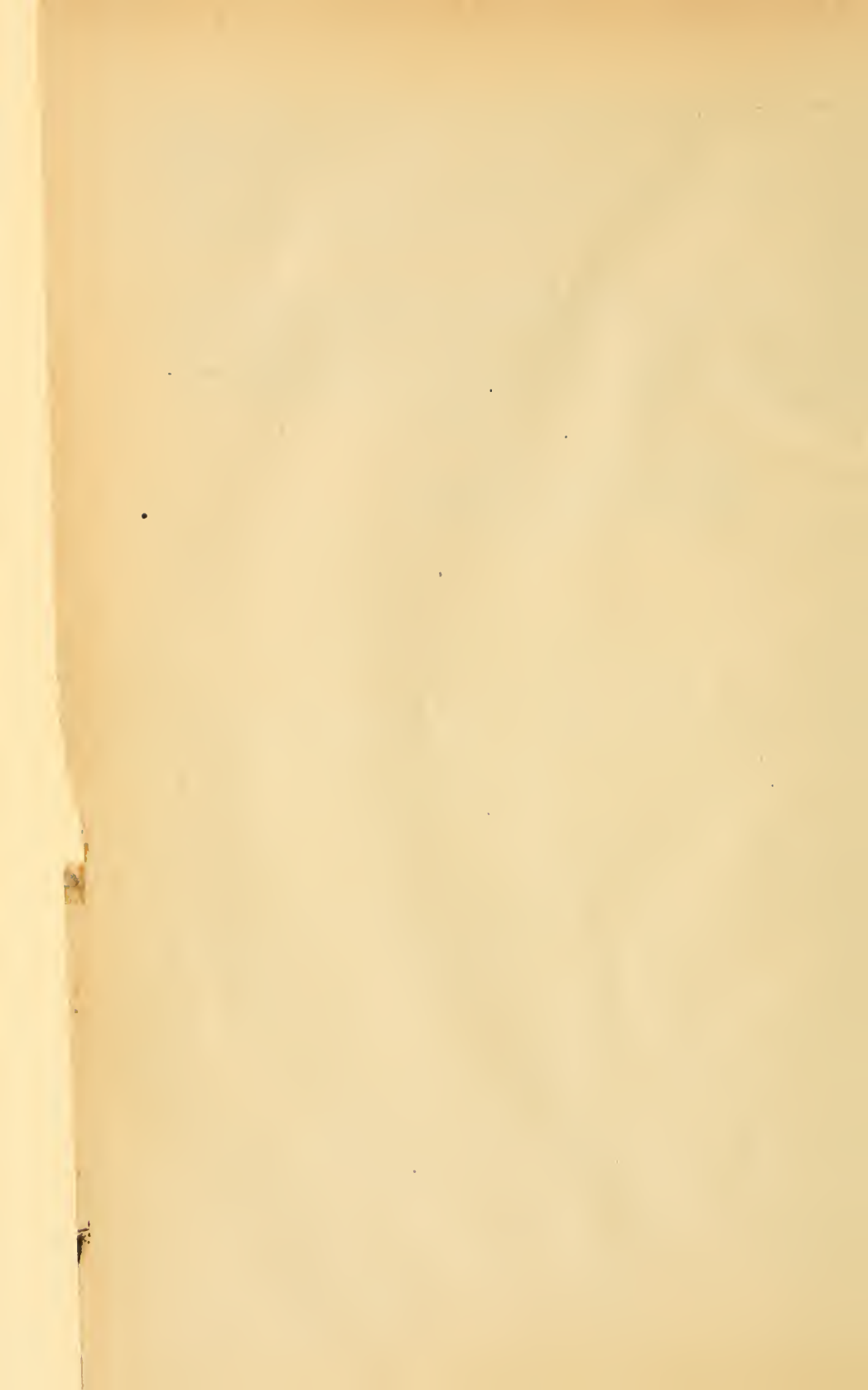
who was another and a very different Indian Chief. The latter figured in the massacre of the garrison at Chicago, 1813, as a friend of the whites, and helped to save the life of John H. Kinzie and family. Wauponseh's first appearance was at the battle of the Thames, Oct. 4, 1813, as a private. At this battle a musket ball passed through his breast, and he having survived the simple-minded and superstitious Indians interpreted his singular recovery as an omen from the Great Spirit that he should be their War Chief. How different was the character of that other Pottawattomie Chief, Shaboneh. He too was in the battle of the Thames, and close beside Tecumseh when he fell. He saw enough of the whites at that battle to convince him that the Red Men should never attempt to conquer the whites, and from that day to the time of his death he was the firm friend of the pale faces, and always warned them if within his power when danger threatened them. His reply to Black Hawk, in 1832, to the latter's statement that if Shaboneh "would unite his braves with the Sacs and Foxes they would have an army like the trees of the forest." "Aye, replied Shaboneh, but the army of the pale faces would outnumber the leaves upon the trees of the forest," should never be forgotten, and his untiring and persistent efforts to warn the frontiers of their danger whenever and wherever he learned of Black Hawk's intention to massacre them are facts well known to all of the early settlers of Northern Illinois. His remains slumber in the Morris cemetery without monument. He was a man of tact as well as talent. When some years since while attending a 4th of July ball, at Ottawa, he was asked to point out the prettiest lady in the room, and accepted the task, after a close scrutiny of the many handsome ladies in the room, and knowing that in selecting one he must give offense to many, he nicely evaded it by selecting Wiomex Oquawka Shaboneh, his own old wife, weighing full 400 pounds, as the one. He died on his farm, (20 acres,) in the Town of Norman, in this county, July 17, 1859, aged 84 years. His wife was drowned in the Mazon, Nov. 30, '64, ag'd 86 yrs, and is buried by his side. Their daughter, Mary, died May 14, 1860, and a grand daughter, Mary Okamo Shaboneh, was drowned with the old squaw, Nov. 30, 1864, and are buried beside Shaboneh. He was of a cheerful disposition, gentle as a lamb, yet brave as a lion. It is a shame that no monument has been erected to his memory. Yet it matters not whether his virtues be inscribed upon a monument of stone or not. His deeds of mercy and self-sacrifice in saving the lives of the early settlers, in 1832, will outlive sculptured marble or polished dome. The Recording Angel has written them down in the Book of Life, in letters of burnished gold, which cannot be obliterated or erased, and among the frontiersmen of that date and their descendants, the name of Shaboneh and his deeds, will be handed down from father to son, and from mother to her prattling babe, from generation to generation, as household words and sacred legends.

There were 19 separate and distinct mounds, where Morris stands, as late as 1845, in each of which the skeleton bones of human beings have been found with many Indian trinkets. The cedar pole, on Wauponsech Street, marks the burial place of Nuequett, and has stood there undoubtedly over a hundred years. When he died we know not—we only know the name from tradition.

The old settlers are rapidly passing away. Since our re-union last September three members of our association have passed to the other side of the silent river. They are—Abraham C. Carter, the second officer of our Society ; George H. Kiersted, whose name has been most intimately interwoven with the history of the county, and for 30 years a county officer ; and Mrs. Morgan Button. Many more will soon follow—

For long we cannot tarry here,
And soon—full soon—the end will be
When free from sorrow, pain and fear
We'll rest at home—Eternity. •

S







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 752 544 8